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STATE FOR DRL, WHA/CAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: SEARCHING A MODEL FOR A NEW CANADIAN DEMOCRACY
PROMOTION AGENCY

REF: OTTAWA 249

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Minister of State for Democratic Reform Steven Fletcher is examining other models for a new Canadian democracy promotion agency (reftel), with an intended focus on aiding like-minded political parties worldwide to help fill a gap in Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) democracy programs. Although Canada's plans for the new agency will likely not emerge clearly until at least fall 2009, its budget should only be in the C\$10-20 million range.
End summary.

12. (C) According to Chief of Staff Vijay Chauhan, Minister of State for Democratic Reform Steven Fletcher is currently in London meeting British officials and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). He noted that the Canadian and British multi-party systems share many attributes, prompting Fletcher to seek out WFD's expertise. He predicted that the new Canadian agency would end up looking more like the WFD than the U.S. NDI or IRI models. Separately, Director of Democratic Governance and Human Rights Patricia Pena at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Strategic Policy and Planning Branch and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Democracy and War Economies Division Deputy Director Carol McQueen confirmed that Fletcher appeared particularly fond of the model of WFD-funded political parties assisting like-minded parties. Pena added that CIDA does not currently fund political party development programs and that a WFD-type agency would "fill the gap" by complementing CIDA's existing work.

13. (C) Pena claimed to poloff that "momentum is building" for Canada's new democracy promotion agency, and that she was already in regular contact with Privy Council Office staff on planning for the new agency. Contrary to CIDA's active role in the design process, DFAIT is finding it difficult even to obtain information from Fletcher's office, McQueen noted. Pena predicted that the government would reveal details of the new agency in the next 3-6 months. McQueen separately speculated instead that Prime Minister Harper might wait even longer for the right political moment to make an announcement, such as the 2010 G8 Summit in Canada.

14. (C) McQueen explained that, following the October 2008 federal election, and in accordance with traditional practice, Prime Minister Harper gave "mandate letters" (confidential instructions) to Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon and International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda asking them to support Fletcher's efforts to create the new agency. McQueen stated that Fletcher still had not met with either

minister to discuss the new agency's creation, however, but did meet with Deputy Foreign Minister Len Edwards. McQueen speculated that Cannon and Oda might feel less comfortable nowadays publicly discussing Canadian democracy promotion for fear of encroaching on fellow Conservative MP Fletcher's turf.

15. (C) Pena and McQueen each predicted that the new agency likely would have a C\$10-20 million budget when it comes into existence. McQueen ventured a guess that the funds would come from left-over CIDA and DFAIT program money rolled-over through "sunset" provisions, rather than a new budget allocation. Pena underscored that this "is a drop in the bucket" compared to CIDA's own C\$600 million democratic governance budget, and confirmed that the new agency should not have any impact on CIDA's budget or existing activities. Each speculated that a larger National Endowment for Democracy-size budget in the C\$75-100 million range would be unrealistic in the current economic climate.

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